(iii) These locomotives will form basis for updating electric locomotives to the State of art technology to meet rapidly growing requirements of traffic and achieving energy conservation, higher operational efficiency, service reliability, reduced maintenance cost and improved customer service.

(iv) Freight locomotive will be capable of hauling 4500 ton loads at service speed of 100 KMPH against 65 KMPH with existing builds. The passenger locomotive will be capable of hauling at service speed of 160 KMPH with feasibility of uprating it to 200 KMPH.

Development of technology in the Railways

1927. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether working groups drawing experts from centres of learning research and industry have been set up in specific fields in the railways to devise ways and means for the development of technology;

(b) if so, by when the experts are likely to submit their recommendations; and

(c) what are the details of the new thrust to railway technical upgradation to boost the railways?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The work of the nine technology development groups is of a continuous nature involving identification of projects and their review periodically till their successful completion.

(c) The Technology Development Plan is integrated to realise five Missions relating to improving the speed of passenger and freight trains, running of heavy haul freight trains, upgradation of the Metre Gauge System and developing capacity for absorbing identified futuristic technlogies.

Modernisation of air traffic

1928. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have cleared the scheme to modernise air traffic control at Bombay and Delhi airports;

(b) if so, what is the total amount of expenditure involved therein; and

(c) by when the scheme is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL) : (a) Not as yet.

(b) and (c) The total cost of the project is estimated at Rs. 293·77 crores. After the project is cleared by the Government, the National Airports Authority will take up the work and it is expected to be completed in about 3 years from the date of start of work.

Indian help to airlift the supplies to Kabul

1929. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that India has offered to assist the Afghan Government in the airlifting of essential supplies to Kabul;